

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3693

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 14157

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, APER
SUBJ: ORGANIZING FOR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

REF: STATE 148782

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATES RECEIVING OBJECTIVES FOR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY AS OUTLINED IN REFTEL AND, GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES HERE, PARTICULARLY WELCOMES THE ATTENTION GIVEN TO NEED FOR ADEQUATE LEAD TIME AND SUFFICIENT INFORMATION (PARA 5) FOR MAKING REPRESENTATIONS. WE HAVE FOUND THAT WHEN THAI DELEGATIONS ARE SENT TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, THEY ARE GIVEN GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR HANDLING ISSUES WHICH ARE EXPECTED TO ARISE AND, WITH ONLY OCCASIONAL EXCEPTION, AUTHORITY TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS ON HOW TO VOTE. DIRECT APPROACH TO THAI DELEGATION AT A CONFERENCE BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVES IS USUALLY, THEREFORE, MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN EMBASSY REPRESENTATIONS TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

2. ALTHOUGH WE APPRECIATE THAT FAST-BREAKING EVENTS IN PARLIAMENTARY SITUATIONS OFTEN PRECLUDE MUCH ADVANCE NOTICE BEING GIVEN FOR APPROACHES IN CAPITALS, WE HAVE FOUND, QUITE FRANKLY, THAT RTG DOES NOT ALWAYS VIEW EVENTS AT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS WITH SAME URGENCY AS DOES U.S. A DECISION TO INSTRUCT ITS DELEGATION MAY TAKE RTG WHAT WOULD TO US APPEAR TO BE AN
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INORDINATE AMOUNT OF TIME, ESPECIALLY IF DECISION REQUIRES COORDINATION AMONG MINISTRIES. ON SOME OCCASIONS ONE CAN SIMPLY HOPE THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE EMBASSY WILL HAVE SOME EFFECT SHOULD THE ISSUE ARISE AT "NEXT YEAR'S MEETING." THAILAND ALSO DOES NOT HAVE DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES FOR RELAYING INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL CONFERENCE SITES, SO THE LOCATION OF A CONFERENCE MAY DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT OUR LAST MINUTE

REPRESENTATIONS IN BANGKOK WILL HAVE ANY EFFECT ON A THAI DELEGATION'S BEHAVIOR. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR A THAI DELEGATION TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE AND NOT REPORT CONFERENCE EVENTS TO THE MFA UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING.

3. IN CONSIDERING THAILAND'S GENERAL POLICIES IN INSTRUCTING ITS DELEGATIONS, THE RTG ATTEMPTS TO COORDINATE POLICY GUIDANCE WITH FELLOW ASEAN MEMBERS. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE, ASEAN COUNTRIES LIKE TO STICK TOGETHER ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. THAILAND ALSO TRIES, AS ONE MFA OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF, TO REMAIN RELATIVELY NEUTRAL ON MIDDLE-EAST QUESTIONS, BUT TENDS TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO ARAB POSITIONS "BECAUSE OF CLOSE RELATIONS WITH MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA." BASICALLY, WHEN AN ISSUE IS NOT OF MUCH PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE TO THE RTG, THAILAND WILL VOTE WITH ITS FRIENDS. THAILAND NUMBERS THE U.S. AMONG ITS FRIENDS, AND OUR REPRESENTATIONS ARE GIVEN SYMPATHETIC HEARING. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REPRESENTATIONS HERE IN BANGKOK, PARTICULARLY ON SHORT NOTICE, HOWEVER, IS LIMITED. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE THIS SITUATION BEING KEPT IN MIND WHEN THE DEPT IS DETERMINING NECESSITY OF MAKING APPROACHES TO THE RTG ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES.

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